

SPRIT OF THE PRESS.

Editorial Opinions of the Leading Journals upon Current Topics—Compiled Every Day for the Evening Telegraph.

WHAT IS THE MATTER WITH PHILADELPHIA?

From the N. Y. Insurance Times.

This question seems to be uppermost in the minds and on the tongues of the mourners as they go about our streets. In ordinary times the City of Brotherly Love was bad enough for agency companies and such others as now and then "took a flyer" or two on some risks there, mostly specials, of course. The last half year has been red with losses there, and Chicago and Elmira will have to look well to their laurels or Philadelphia will bear them off and be recognized as the champion city of the Union for fire, and destructive ones too. Already quite a number of companies have withdrawn their agencies, and some twenty-five more, it is said by one of their city papers, will do so at the end of the present year. Companies that had a fair balance of profit a year and a half ago are now very far on the other side of the ledger. What can matter be with our sister city? We have heard it hinted that there was more than one screw loose in the present fire department. If so there is no safety for underwriters or citizens, and the city authorities cannot awake too soon to a realization of the fact. Something must be done or insurance companies will cease to assume risks in a city which is fast becoming like the cities of the plain in ancient days. The truth is, Philadelphia must have an efficient paid fire department and fire patrol before underwriting can be carried on profitably or the citizens enjoy that protection which the law should afford in prosperous and wealthy cities. We have had our days of trial here, and have happily passed them, we trust, and we have no hesitancy in saying that Philadelphia will find no security and peace until she is completely redeemed from her present system of protection, and the dangerous members of which it is composed. She has already been too long disgraced by her present department and the brutal fights of its members. For more than twenty years the evil has been growing upon her, until underwriters and citizens have more to fear from those who should be their defenders than from the fiery element itself. We say this much not from any unkind feeling to the city or towards the underwriters, who have done all they could to remedy the evil, but it is time not only the city but the country should cease to be disgraced by such scenes as we have witnessed within the last two years. Self-interest and a due regard for city reputation demand a change, and if they are to retain their fair name and credit the citizens must move at once and with determination in favor of a well-organized paid fire department.

RADICAL BLUNDERS IN NEW YORK POLITICS.

From the N. Y. World.

The prostrate condition of the Republican party in this State must be a puzzle to Republicans in other parts of the country, who, although their strength is declining, maintain the efficiency of their political organization. But in New York, both city and State, the party is broken by intestine feuds, and will be beaten in this election by at least a hundred thousand majority. It is like an army which has degenerated into a mob by loss of discipline. The Radical party in this State has been brought into this condition by a series of obvious blunders, some of them committed by General Grant, others by the local politicians. Grant began muddling New York politics from his jealousy of Fenton, whom he suspected of aspiring to the Presidency. After the withdrawal of Thurlow Weed, Fenton exhibited more address in managing and manipulating the party than any other politician in the State. Without any high or commanding qualities, he is cunning, active, dexterous, and has more skill as a political intriguer than any other of Mr. Weed's successors. He caused himself to be twice elected Governor, and then United States Senator; and was generally recognized as the leader of the Republican party of New York. Fenton's ascendancy troubled two men—Conkling and Grant. Conkling could not bear to be eclipsed by a man whose talents in debate he despised, and he undertook to supplant his rival by whispering in General Grant's ear that Fenton was aiming to be his successor. If Fenton was permitted to control the Republican party in New York, he could send a delegation favorable to his claims to the National Convention in 1872, and might prove a formidable competitor for the Presidential nomination. Conkling having aroused Grant's jealousy, and caused it to run in the same channel as his own, the joint efforts of both were directed to the overthrow and humiliation of Fenton. The first step was the appointment of Murphy as Collector, and the decapitation of Fenton's friends. The next step was the bribing of delegates at the Saratoga Convention, depriving Fenton of the fruits of his activity in working the party caucuses. By these means Conkling and Grant won a barren triumph. They gained control of the organization, but lost their hold upon the party. They gave Fenton and his friends the strongest motives for wishing its defeat in this election; and the effect of their suppressed hostility is manifest in the spirit of discord which pervades the party throughout the State. Grant and Conkling made a great blunder in beginning their war on Fenton so soon. If they had left him undisturbed until after this election, he would have kept the party united; and although it would have been beaten in any event, the disaster could not have been charged upon the bad management of General Grant. But Fenton's friends will now be able to say, after the election returns are in, that the party was ruined by the gross incompetence of its new leaders. Their premature attack on Fenton will aid him in regaining his ascendancy. Instead of destroying confidence in him, they will have destroyed all confidence in themselves; and by a natural reaction the party will rate him higher after witnessing the disastrous effect of repudiating his leadership. By precipitating the quarrel too soon they have ruined the party in this State, without in the long run weakening Fenton's influence over it.

NOTHING.

From the N. Y. Tribune.

Perhaps, after all, her Aherns and Haggertys are not the representative men of Philadelphia, and she has other claims to be known as the City of Brotherly Love apart from the alluring blandishments of her police, with their whistles, to win votes for the Democratic ticket, and the high, electric, amenities by which her thieves and Return Judges lately settled the election. Now and then the genial charity and refinement of the old Quaker element make themselves felt through the strata of cut-throats and petty ward politicians that have the rule at present in the city of Penn. A touching little incident occurred the other day in proof of this. Some good Brother Cheryble among her school directors conceived the idea a year ago of an annual nutting party, by which the children of the public and charitable schools would be taken out and turned loose into all the solitary places near the city for one day in the year, to find themselves free from the streets and alleys, from human trade and human trickery, and face to face with nature. One day last week the idea was carried into effect. Old mother nature, it seems, kept one of her kindest smiles in the damp days for the little ones; the sun was warm, the air bracing, and a yellow October haze turned the road-dust into sifted gold, and every stably hill-top into the delectable mountains. Upwards of seventy thousand children made a happy day of it. This school holiday seems an ordinary affair even to the Philadelphia press, but we find it more suggestive and worthy of note than the most horrible of the recent murders and adulteries. A day in the woods for 70,000 children, half of whom, most likely, never had gathered before, or climbed for a shell-bark before! To the big people, the teachers, and even old Brother Cheryble himself, it was no doubt only a ride in the cars at half-fare, anxiety, noise, damp grass, to be followed by a night of aching heads and legs. But to the children it was something which in after years would appear a big, bright slice of their childhood. It was a new song in the dusky market-place, with a far-off echo of heaven in it which they would learn by heart, and we fancy will never forget. Even Croesus must pay a sum that grips him for a picture by the old masters; but every ragged urchin took home with him from that nutting frolic a landscape of red-tinted trees and glancing rivers which he brands nor Turner could paint; a picture at whose coloring no critic should ever fling his vapidities; its greens and umbers would only deepen and soften into rarer truth with time.

act of folly. The effect is to incense and exasperate all Democrats and every citizen who has any State pride, and this indignant feeling will bring out a larger Democratic vote than ever polled in this city before. The Federal election laws will therefore increase the Democratic majority which they were intended to reduce. Their passage and enforcement are a self-defeating blunder.

Another capital blunder of the radicals was perpetrated in their selection of candidates. There is not a strong man on their ticket. Woodford has been fatally damaged by his perille speeches and the disclosures about his connection with the slave Augustus, and the Republican candidate for Comptroller voted for the "infamous Erie bill." The Republicans of the State have been taught by their newspapers to regard the so-called Erie bill as a flagrant iniquity, and they will not be eager to vote for a man who aids in its passage. But the great weakness of the ticket consists in the fact that it is made up of men of no political standing in their own party, and who possess no political strength except what results from their nomination. The blunders here enumerated have brought the Republican party of the State to the verge of dissolution.

WAR BY PROCLAMATION.

From the N. Y. Times.

The latest manifesto of M. Gambetta is a very suggestive document; and as such an account of what it leaves unsaid as for what it contains, its confession of the weakness of France, and the remedy it offers for her misfortunes show too clearly how fatal they have been. "You are now rid of unworthy chiefs," says the Minister of the Interior to those rather undefined entities, "the armies of France." Where the successors of the deposed Generals are to come from M. Gambetta does not attempt to explain. The somewhat unsatisfactory phrase of "proper guidance" is all the indication we have of the extent of the military talent at the command of the Provisional Government. Accompanied as the present document is by a despatch announcing the resignation of General Bourbaki, the only leader of first-class ability left outside of Paris, the vague expression of confidence bodes little good to France. Nor can much comfort be gleaned from the very emphatic statement that "the time of treachery and weakness is past." Were M. Gambetta perfectly certain of that fact, he would probably not be at the trouble to state it, nor would he, as on previous occasions, take such infinite pains to lash the patriotism of his countrymen into fury by a slightly apocryphal suggestion like that of "families outraged." If Frenchmen are to fight at all, they have compelling cause enough without being stimulated by the device of investing Germans with the attributes of Turks.

It is impossible to note the neatly-turned sentences of this document, and the little bit of special pleading for the republic with which it closes, without a certain mournful consciousness of how impotent such an appeal, under present circumstances, is likely to be. The sentiments are in the main unexceptionable, and the mode of their expression does credit to the eloquent enologist of Baudin and the irreconcilable assailant of the Empire. But France wants deeds—not words; Generals—not pamphleteers; arms—not sentiment. Without the latter she could make shift to live for a while; with the former much might yet be retrieved. Unfortunately, it is the most vital requirements that are absent, and the superfluous that are to be had in abundance. And thus it comes that the demoralization which made the garrison of Metz in the later sorties fly like an unarmed rabble before the first onset of the Prussians, is but a type of the paralysis of united effort that seems to have overtaken France. On paper there are upwards of sixty Departments that are still free from the exactions of the invader; in fact, his influence seems to pervade every corner of France, and to have half conquered a panic-stricken populace before his appearance completes the task. That France may cherish for many years the hope of a successful territorial revenge for her great humiliations, no one can doubt. That she cannot do it now is equally obvious; and, harsh as the sentence may be, it becomes daily more plain that there is but one resource left to her—to make the best terms she can with the conqueror.

THE PHILADELPHIANS HAVE HIT UPON A GREAT AND BEAUTIFUL IDEA HERE, WIDER IN APPLICATION THAN THEY DREAMED.

The truth is that the German practice in education is in this respect, as in many others, far in advance of our own. From the Kindergarten, where the children are taught as much by means of plants and flowers as any other mode, to the very highest culture of the Universities, the pupil there is as systematically exposed to the spontaneous ever-waiting teaching of nature as to the more artificial training of books. There are no educators so ennobling, so liberalizing, as the hills and the sea. Contact with God's world, outside of a town, is as necessary for the full development of the soul of a boy as fresh air is for his body. There is perhaps not one of us who cannot testify to this out of his own experience; not one of us who cannot go back to some farm, some old quarry, or perhaps only to some rare odd day of gleaning or fishing which holds a tighter grip on our memory, and has spurred deeper into our life than did any incessant dinging of Euclid or Homer. The English and American theory of education is to put both brain and soul of a child into a perpetual training. They are crammed, purged, amputated—a faculty cut off there, a faculty added here. Of the higher education, the simple exposure of the growing, incomplete nature to healthful atmospheres, to music, art, to the out-door influences, where it will without effort develop in strength, breadth, gentle temper, and a capacity for happiness, we know almost nothing. We wish our neighbor's pleasant holiday could be a frequent rule in our schools, and not an occasional chance. In the meantime, we thank them for it heartily, and almost forgive them for it their McMullins and Haggertys.

RUSSIA AND THE EASTERN QUESTION.

From the N. Y. Herald.

The rumor of a secret treaty between Russia and Prussia, destined, if true, to be known as the Wiesbaden treaty, has lent a new and somewhat lively interest to the European situation. The burden of the rumor was consulted before the war was commenced, and that while Russia bound herself to hold off for a reasonable length of time during the continuance of the war, she was bound, in the event of Prussian defeat, to step forth and forbid Prussia, or rather German, dismemberment. Prussia, on the other hand, in the event of victory, bound herself to stand by Russia in any attempt she might make to force the annulment of the obnoxious clauses of the treaty of Paris. The French paper in London, *La Situation*, inspired by the imperialists, admits the existence of the treaty. That such a treaty has been signed by Russia and Prussia may or may not be true. It is undeniable, however, that the rumor has done its most admirably with the events and necessities of the hour. We are not disposed to regard it as mere rumor. The action of the Russian Government, hitherto inexplicable, now begins to be intelligible. Since the Crimean war Russia has been peaceful. Russia, in fact, so far as the Government was concerned, practically ceased to be a European Power. Internal improvements, the emancipation of the serfs, the construction of railroads, the strengthening of her position in the East, occupied the attention and, to all outward seeming, satisfied the ambition of Russian statesmen. To watchful and knowing observers it was apparent that Russia was making good use of her quietude and leisure, and such persons felt that she was preparing for some grand initiative after such a fashion that, when the eventualities came, she would be ready to make war in the East or in the West, as was most convenient. In other words, it was the conviction of many persons well qualified to judge that Russia was waiting her opportunity. If the Russian Government now thinks that the desired opportunity has arrived, few will say she has miscalculated.

From a Russian standpoint let us look at the situation. Since the days of Peter the Great Russian ambition has been directed towards Constantinople and the Bosphorus, and such persons felt that she was preparing for some grand initiative after such a fashion that, when the eventualities came, she would be ready to make war in the East or in the West, as was most convenient. In other words, it was the conviction of many persons well qualified to judge that Russia was waiting her opportunity. If the Russian Government now thinks that the desired opportunity has arrived, few will say she has miscalculated. From a Russian standpoint let us look at the situation. Since the days of Peter the Great Russian ambition has been directed towards Constantinople and the Bosphorus, and such persons felt that she was preparing for some grand initiative after such a fashion that, when the eventualities came, she would be ready to make war in the East or in the West, as was most convenient. In other words, it was the conviction of many persons well qualified to judge that Russia was waiting her opportunity. If the Russian Government now thinks that the desired opportunity has arrived, few will say she has miscalculated.

terrenean; but Russia in the Mediterranean would destroy the policy of centuries. Great Britain, as we have said, alone could not arrest the march of Russia southward; and Great Britain, trembling for her naval supremacy, might seek strength from the other European powers. Where could she find allies? If this Wiesbaden treaty be not a mere rumor it is evident that she could not count on Prussia. France is out of the question, Spain is powerless, Italy, growing into possible greatness, has already too much on hand. Allies for Great Britain in such a contest there would be none; for although Denmark and Sweden and Holland might be induced to do something, their co-operation would not be more than a straw in the balance. Russia could easily buy up Austria by giving her the Danubian principalities. It is impossible that, under all, Great Britain, yielding to the necessity of the situation, may consent to the enthronement of the Czar in Constantinople on condition that she is allowed to take possession of the land of the Pharaohs? This treaty does indeed give a very peculiar complexion to the European situation. Russia may not march to Constantinople, but she can if she chooses. It is our firm belief that if she does show any signs of carrying out her established and well-known purpose Great Britain will immediately take possession of Egypt.

How completely in three short months war has destroyed the balance of power! How the schemes of statesmen have been baffled! How many resolute wills have been found that Russia was defeated its purpose! If Prussia does attempt to carry out her traditional policy we may have a conflagration which will envelop Europe—a destructive war which will leave Europe a comparative desert and which will put the destruction of the Roman empire completely in the shade. The fall of the Pope, the deportation of the Sultan, the re-establishment of the German empire and the restoration of the Christian empire of the East may make the year 1870 as memorable for its great events in the East as for those which are convulsing Western Europe.

"WANTED—A GENERAL."

From the N. Y. Sun.

On August 20 a special correspondent of the *Sun*, himself a Frenchman, telegraphed to us from Paris that "generalship is utterly wanting," and scarcely two weeks ago the Paris *Patrie*, now or recently published in Poitiers, prefixed to its leading article the title, "Wanted—A General." The confession is as significant as it is humiliating. A nation naturally warlike and fond of martial fame, and which has devoted its genius and resources to the establishment of a military system considered inferior to none in existence, has found itself in time of need without a competent leader. France, threatened with complete subjugation, looks only to the roll of generals, many of them bronzed and scarred by years of service, and finds only routine officers and martinets—valiant men enough, doubtless, but incapable of directing great armies—or the incompetent favorites of the late Emperor, whose incapacity is the laughing stock of the very men they assume to command. With the exception of Trochu, it may be doubted whether there is a French general of high rank living who can conduct a campaign on a comprehensive scale. This is the lamentable result of eighteen years of imperial rule. The first Bonaparte, being a transcendent military genius, gathered around him a circle of great generals. The last Bonapartes, being only an adroit intriguer, discouraged eminent military talent, and surrounded himself with adventurers great only as public plunderers. Such were St. Arnaud, his first commander in the Crimea, and Lebel, his last chief of staff. But until the commencement of the present campaign the people—nay, even the Government itself—believed the French army invincible.

Thus far the representative men of the French army, the MacMahons, Bazaines, Canroberts, and Frossards, have shown themselves to be fighting generals only, and fighting generals who cannot look beyond the efforts of mere personal courage, we know from bitter experience are an expensive luxury. Leaving out of view the mismanagement which, in the beginning of the campaign, caused the French army to be severed, and the main body to be cooped up in Metz, while the defeated fragments retreated upon Chalons, it is necessary only, in order to prove the incompetency of the French commanders, to consider the ill-fated movement of MacMahon toward Sedan, which practically resulted in the destruction of the entire army originally confronting the Prussians in Lorraine. The diary of a French officer attached to the Fifth Corps, under General de Failly, extracts from which are published in the *Wall Mail Gazette*, throws considerable light on this subject.

To effect his hazardous flank march, MacMahon should have had a thoroughly disciplined force, well equipped, and, above all, well provisioned. The movement was one of the most difficult that a general could undertake, and without good troops success was scarcely possible. But what does MacMahon do? This last hope of the French army collects a mass of demoralized fugitives and raw levies. From the abundant supplies at Chalons he furnishes his men with a few biscuits each, and gives the order to march, expecting an army of over a hundred thousand men to subsist on the country it is about to traverse. So much for the foresight of the General. Of course, the biscuits were soon devoured by the hungry soldiers, and they were left to shift for themselves, notwithstanding it was all-important that they should oppose the enemy with full strength as well as with courage and discipline. They barely kept themselves alive, when not under fire of the Prussians, by begging or stealing bread and potatoes from the peasants; and even of such supplies the amount was insufficient. If we may credit the diary, for six days, from August 25 to August 31, the troops received no rations of any kind, but foraged on the country. In every encounter during that time, in tollsome marches over ploughed fields heavy from rains, and in their brief and comfortless bivouacs, they suffered the cruellest pangs of hunger. And this mob of half-starved men was the army with which MacMahon expected to confront twice or thrice the number of Germans, flushed with victory, and to effect a junction with Bazaine. To insufficiency of food, incompetent generalship and neglect of discipline seem to have been added. Corps and divisions marched by themselves, apparently without directions from any controlling head, and the superior officers kept themselves aloof when their presence was most needed. Thus, after a long engagement with the enemy on August 29, the 5th Corps marched the whole of the night, without rest or food, toward Beaumont. But we will quote the words of the diary:—"August 30.—We arrived at Beaumont, a hilly and woody country, at 4 A. M. The men are utterly exhausted by the march, by hunger, and above all by the want of sleep. There is no possibility of bringing order into the ranks. The presence of the general

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was indispensable, but none of them was to be seen on the spot, and the soldiers fell down asleep, without guards, without a single sentry. The sight was most lamentable." A few hours later the troops awoke, to find their position vigorously shelled by the Prussians. What ensued is thus described:—"The whole camp seizes its arms in disorderly fashion; the officers do their best to give some kind of organization to the first movements; the artillery is soon at work, and the battle begins. But a tremendous panic arises in the village, crowded with unarmed soldiers who were gone from the camp in search of provisions. A frantic rush begins in the direction of Metz; and the flying mass would naturally have drawn with it a part of the troops already in line on this side of the village, if the officers had not intervened, pistols in hand. The general, just as much surprised as the troops, presently comes to his senses. They take the command. The retreat is gradually organized, and on reaching rather elevated ground we come out from under the intolerable fire."

The subsequent events of that day, as related by the French officer—the confusion, mismanagement, frequently recurring panics, and demoralization of the troops—exceed anything of the kind witnessed in our own war. The retreat of McClellan to Harpers Landing or of Pope to Centreville after the second battle of Bull Run was an orderly movement in comparison with this march of an attacking army; and that the French conducted themselves so manfully in the closing battle at Sedan is due entirely to the inherent valor of the race. Their commanders deserve no credit for it. MacMahon can never again hope to rank as the general of an army. As a division or brigade commander, he may answer; but that is all. Well may the nation exclaim in this crisis, "Wanted, a General."

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Incorporated 1825. Charter Perpetual.

No. 210 WALNUT Street, opposite Independence Square.

This Company, favored and known to the community for over forty years, continues to insure against loss or damage by fire on Public or Private Buildings, either permanent or limited time. Also on Furniture, Stocks of Goods, and Merchandise generally, on liberal terms.

Their Capital is secured with a large Surplus Fund, is invested in the most careful manner, which enables them to offer to the insured an undoubted security in the case of loss.

DIRECTORS.

Daniel Smith, Jr., Thomas Smith, Isaac Hagler, Jr., Henry Lewis, John Devereux, Wm. G. Boulenger, John Devereux, Franklin A. Comly, DANIEL SMITH, Jr., President, WM. G. CHOWELL, Secretary, 8 30

FRAME INSURANCE COMPANY

No. 509 CHESTNUT Street.